



June 23, 2022

Ms. Kerin Hughes  
President, NCAIS Board

Dear Kerin and Colleagues,

So much has changed in the world around us since I began my role as Executive Director back in 2007. The NCAIS of 2022 looks quite different than the one I stepped into 15 years ago, yet, the heart and soul of our association has remained constant. NCAIS has grown in programs, staff, services, and resources. We have been bold and contemporary as leaders in the online learning community. We have received 3 Edward E. Ford grants which have enabled us to launch VISnet, Women in Leadership, and our online race and equity courses for boards, heads, faculty, and administrators. We have continuously scanned the horizon, anticipated needs, and stepped into new arenas when opportunities came our way or necessity called.

We are finally, after 3 school years, beginning to see the other side of the worst public health crisis in modern times. The pandemic has presented us with the greatest test we've ever faced as individuals and as educators. Our selfless response stands as an ultimate testament to our courage, grace, tenacity, grit, and dedication as independent school professionals. We have found silver linings, new capacities, and talents we never knew we had. We have been rocked to the core by the COVID deaths of family, friends, and members of our school community. We have walked on egg shells and come to terms with no-win situations as we navigated the polarization of our communities. Hand in hand, our schools and the NCAIS team have risen to the challenges and truly embodied our "better together" slogan.

Needless to say, these last three years have changed us in ways we might never have expected. For me, the change has been a reallocation of priorities and a realization that both NCAIS and I are ripe for change. Years spent judging the value of each day by the number of tasks accomplished, juggling multiple priorities, and valiantly striving to have-it-all have fueled my passion, enabled me to thrive professionally and serve NCAIS well. After 15 wonderful years, the birth of grandchildren, and the retirement of my husband, however, my focus and passion have shifted. I have decided that slowing down and enjoying the moment, while somewhat foreign to me, is not necessarily a bad thing. The idea of retirement has moved from a faint dot on the horizon to a reality whose time has come. It is with excitement, gratitude, and a bit of trepidation, that I announce my plans to retire from my position as Executive Director effective June 30, 2023.

Serving NCAIS as Executive Director has been one of the greatest honors and joys of my life. The many faces of those who have guided me on the NCAIS Board represent a collective wisdom and constant support for which I am immensely grateful. You listened, encouraged, sometimes cautioned, and always made me feel valued and appreciated. You trusted me and shared in the excitement of entrepreneurial ventures like VISNet. Together, we've had fun, we've grown, and we've accomplished much.

To my many colleagues and friends across the NCAIS spectrum I offer a humble thank you. I am in awe of all you do for your schools, your students, and your community while at the same time enthusiastically volunteering to support and plan NCAIS events. You are and always will be "my people!" Thanks to your efforts, our small but mighty NCAIS team became even mightier!

As I transition over the next 12 months, I look forward to working with the NCAIS Board and my successor, Stephanie Keaney, to plan and position our wonderful association for the future. We are in a good place and the future is bright!

With gratitude,

Linda S. Nelson  
Executive Director